

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 AF-04 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 SP-02 EUR-08 EA-06 NEA-06 L-01

/059 W

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R 061210Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 388

INFO USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 10294

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UNGA CG CB

SUBJECT: KHMER AT 29TH UNGA: ZAIRE

SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS INDICATED DISAPPOINTMENT AT ZAIRE VOTE ON KHMER ISSUE AT LEVELS ABOVE AND BELOW FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT UMBA FAILED TO CARRY OUT MOBUTU'S INSTRUCTIONS TO ABSTAIN ON PRIORITY QUESTIONS. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS EASUM CALL IN AMBASSADOR MBEKA TO REGISTER AGAIN OUR CONCERN AND TO SEEK EXPLANATION FROM GOZ. END SUMMARY.

1. SHORTLY BEFORE BISENGIMANA, DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENCY, DEPARTED FOR FAR EAST ON MOBUTU'S PLANE, I TOLD HIM THAT DEPT AND EMBASSY WERE SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED BY ZAIRE'S VOTE ON KHMER ISSUE IN UNGA. I ASKED HOW HE COULD EXPLAIN VOTE IN LIGHT OF ASSURANCES HE AND FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA HAD GIVEN ME ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT MOBUTU THAT ZAIRE WOULD ABSTAIN ON PRIORITY VOTE AND ON VOTE ON ASEAN RESOLUTION.

2. HE SOUNDED INCREDULOUS, PROMISHED TO INVESTIGATE, SAID HE WOULD TRY TO SEE ME BEFORE DEPARTURE, BUT THAT IT

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MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE. IT WASN'T.

3. POLITICAL COUNSELOR ALSO EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AT FOREIGN OFFICE (KINSHASA 10206). MY ONLY CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA SINCE VOTE, OCCURRED BEFORE I WAS AWARE OF HOW ZAIRE HAD VOTED, WAS CONGRATULATORY ON HIS PART AND MISTAKENLY APPRECIATIVE ON MY PART.

4. WHILE IT IS HARD TO BE CERTAIN WHAT HAPPENDED, MY CONCLUSION IS THAT UMBA, OUT OF STUPIDITY OR INCOMPETENCE OR MALICE OR POSSIBLY ALL THREE, SCREWED THIS ONE UP.

5. TO RECAP PLAY, HE AND MOBUTU HAD BEEN WILLING AT END OF OCTOBER TO BE ABSENT WHEN ISSUE CAME TO VOTE. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THIS WAS STILL POSITION AT TIME MY BRIEF CHAT WITH MOBUTU NOV 17 AND MY FIRST MEETING WITH UMBA ON THIS SUBJECT NOV 19 BUT IT WAS PRECISELY DURING THIS TIME PERIOD THAT MOBUTU, REACTING TO SOVIET SLAP IN THE FACE, DECIDED ON FAR EASTERN TRIP AND UNDOUBTEDLY WAS FULLY EXPOSED TO PRC AND ALSO NORTH KOREAN VIEWS. (WE PRESUME ZAIRIAN UNDEL REPORTED STRONG PRESSURE FROM PRO-SIHANOUK FORCES.) THUS, WHEN I SAW UMBA LATE NOV 20 HE INDICATED ZAIRE WOULD GO ALL THE WAY WITH SIHANOUK. AT THAT DIFFICULT MEETING, AS I HAD BEFORE, I DREW VERBAL DIAGRAM OF UNGA PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION AND URGED UMBA TO TAKE ISSUE BACK TO PRESIDENT ONCE AGAIN BUT I LEFT CONVINCED HE NEITHER UNDERSTOOD NOR WANTED TO UNDERSTAND. THEREFORE, I WENT THROUGH SITUATION WITH BISENGIMANA EARLY NOV 21. HE UNDERSTOOD AFTER FIVE MINUTES WHAT UMBA HAD FAILED UNDERSTAND IN TWO LENGTHLY DISCUSSIONS. HE PROMISED REOPEN ISSUE WITH MOBUTU. MID-AFTERNOON NOV 22 BISENGIMANA TELEPHONED TO INFORM ME MOBUTU, UMBA AND HE HAD DISCUSSED ISSUE AGAIN AND DECIDED: ZAIRE WOULD VOTE FOR PRO-SIHANOUK RESOLUTION IF IT CAME TO VOTE BUT WOULD ABSTAIN ON PRIORITY QUESTION AND ON ASEAN RESOLUTION. HE ADDED, AND I CONSIDER THIS MOST SIGNIFICANT REMARK OF ALL, THAT PRESIDENT HAD NEVER BEEN INFORMED BY UMBA OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASEAN RESOLUTION, PRO-SIHANOUK RESOLUTION, AND CRUCIAL PRIORITY QUESTION. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE ALSO SOMEWHAT GRATUITOUSLY ADVISED ME THAT I SHOULD INNO WAY LET UMBA KNOW THAT I HAD DISCUSSED KHMER QUESTION WITH BISENGIMANA. HE ASKED IF I HAD YET HEARD FROM UMBA AND I SAID UMBA HAD CALLED BUT I HAD BEEN OUT OF OFFICE AND HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO REACH HIM.

6. WHEN I TALKED WITH UMBA ABOUT ONE HOUR LATER, UMBA

CONFIRMED THAT PRESIDENT HAD AGREED ZAIRE SHOULD ABSTAIN ON PRIORITY BUT I HAD TO ASK UMBA ABOUT ASEAN RESOLUTION TO GET PLEDGE OF ABSTENTION THERE ALSO.

7. IN EVEN, ZAIRE REP NEW YORK EITHER DID NOT GET MESSAGE OR GOT IT IN UNCLEAR FORM OR DISREGARDED HIS INSTRUCTIONS. I THINK IT WAS LACK OF CLARITY ON UMBA'S PART WHICH RAN THROUGH THIS EXERCISE IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. INDEED, OUT OF CONCERN FOR THIS POSSIBILITY AS WELL AS TO DISCUSS ANOTHER MATTER, I TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS FROM MONDAY, NOV 25 UNTIL VOTE TO REACH UMBA TO URGE HIM TO TELEPHONE NEW YORK. HE WAS GENUINELY BUSY WITH VISITING DIGNITARIES TO 9TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND THEN HE WAS SICK. NOW HE ALSO IS EN ROUTE TO FAR EAST.

8. ON THINKING OVER THIS SAD TALE, I RECOMMEND THAT IN ADDITION TO APPROACHES WE HAVE MADE HERE, EASUM SHOULD CALL IN AMBASSADOR MBEKA AND MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

(1) WE HAD VALUED HIGHLY MOBUTU'S STATEMENT AT LUBUMBASHI THAT BETWEEN FRIENDS IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR ZAIRE TO BE ABSENT AT TIME KHMER VOTE.

(2) WE REGRETTED BUT UNDERSTOOD CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED MOBUTU TO DECIDE HE HAD TO SUPPORT PRO-SIHANOUK RESOLUTION.

(3) WE WERE NEVERTHELESS HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE OF FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA'S ASSURANCES THAT ON PRESIDENT'S INSTRUCTIONS ZAIRE WOULD ABSTAIN ON VOTE ON PRIORITY QUESTION.

(4) WE WERE SURPRISED AND DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED WHEN
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ZAIRE, CONTRARY TO PRESIDENT'S DECISION AS CONVEYED BY UMBA, VOTED DOWN THE LINE WITH PRO-SIHANOUK FORCES.

(5) WE WOULD APPRECIATE AMBASSADOR MBEKA'S OBTAINING AN EXPLANATION FROM HIS GOVERNMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBER ADMISSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KINSHA10294
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740356-0522
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741255/aaaabuyo.tel
Line Count: 160
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUL 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <20 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KHMER AT 29TH UNGA: ZAIRE SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS INDICATED DISAPPOINTMENT AT ZAIRE
TAGS: PFOR, CG, CB, UNGA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005